Meier phone

9-28-73

By The Associated Press

The Justice Department will undertake an immediate investigation to determine whether telephone conversations between a former aide to billionaire Howard Hughes and President Nixon's brother, F. Donald Nixon, were tapped, a spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office says.

Asst. U.S. Atty. John R. Lusk said Thursday the Justice Department had agreed to a request by attorneys for former Hughes aide John H. Meier to investigate the possibility that telephone conversations between their client and the President's brother were tapped at the request of the President.

The Washington Post reported last month that Nixon ordered the Secret Service to tap his brother's phone during the past few years because he feared embarrassment through his businessman brother's financial dealings.

Meier, who was fired as a scientific adviser to the Hughes Tool Co.—now called Summa Corp.—in Nevada in 1969, currently is under indictment here for alleged failure to report $270,000 in income in 1968-69.

It has been reported that Meier was fired from the Hughes post because he ignored White House orders to disassociate himself from F. Donald Nixon, a longtime friend of Meier.

Meier's attorneys are requesting transcripts of taped conversations between their client and Nixon if they were, in fact, recorded.

"I can't agree to turn over transcripts without knowing what is in them," Lusk said. He reminded newsmen that it still has not been determined whether the Donald Nixon's telephone was tapped.

Meier's trial which was scheduled to begin Oct. 12, has been delayed until Jan. 7 to permit a thorough investigation of possible electronic surveillance.

Meier contends that the indictment against him was "politically motivated" and that the charges were based on evidence illegally obtained through taps on Donald Nixon's phone.